



Policy: 16-19 Further Education
Financial Support Fund
2025/26

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POLICY: 16-19 Further Education Financial Support Fund

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1.0 Purpose

Franklin Sixth Form College recognises that the 16-19 Financial Support Fund has an important role to play in removing the financial barriers learners face when continuing in Further Education, especially those students in a lower income household. The primary purpose of the Financial Support funding is to enable these students to access further education and training and to support them to fulfil their maximum academic potential.

The Financial Support Fund will be distributed in a fair and consistent way and in accordance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Government recommendations. A student's eligibility will be assessed on the learner's social and economic circumstances as described within the policy.

The eligibility detailed below is correct as of November 2025.

For the Discretionary elements of the Financial Support Fund, the College retains the right to make amendments to the fund throughout the academic year. All applications to this fund will be considered individually and funds will be granted where a genuine need for assistance has been proven. Support from the discretionary fund will be awarded on a first come, first served basis and will only be granted during term time. The financial support fund exists to support a student's educational needs during their time in College. As such, the College will monitor student attendance and where any student's attendance falls below the minimum College attendance rate of 92%, the College reserves the right to reduce or cease any award granted.

Any information provided by applicants will be used by the College to administer the Financial Support Awards system. Information will be stored and processed in line with our privacy notice, which can be found on the College website.

2.0 Scope

2.1 Organisation and Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the policy lies with the College Leadership Team, monitoring of compliance with the policy is the responsibility of the Finance Director who is also responsible for the delivery and administration of the policy through the Finance Team.

2.2 General eligibility criteria for all bursaries and awards

To be able to apply for a bursary in the 2025 to 2026 academic year, students must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31st August 2025. Students over the age of 19 are only eligible to receive a discretionary financial support award if they are continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or are aged 19-24 and have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In exceptional circumstances, students under the age of 16 attending College may qualify for a financial support award, such students would need to contact the College directly to discuss this.

In all cases eligible students will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria.

2.3 The Financial Support Application Process

Students can apply to the fund from May 2025, ahead of starting College in September 2025. Written application forms and supporting information will be sent out to all new applicants in May 2025. The College will continue to welcome applications throughout the year, however, in order to ensure that the funds are used most effectively, the College encourages applications to be submitted as soon as possible. As far as possible, all applications will be processed and students advised of the outcome within two weeks of receipt, although at peak times this may take a little longer.

2.4 Appeals

Appeals against the outcomes of an application must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal.

2.5 Help and guidance

Franklin's Finance team are available to provide any support required to complete the application form and to explain the system in detail. They can be contacted on 01472 875000 or email studentfinance@franklin.ac.uk

3.0 Types of Financial Support and award criteria

There are four types of bursary available to 16 – 19 students:

3.1 Type 1 - Priority Group Financial Support

- **What is this award?**

Students who are defined by the Government as being within a vulnerable group of students (see section below) are recognised as those students to whom a Priority Award may be made of up to £1,200 per year to remove financial barriers preventing them from accessing education. Students must also be in a programme of study that lasts a minimum of 30 weeks to qualify for the full award. Students on part time study programmes or study programmes of less than 30 weeks may be awarded a pro-rata amount.

The College will assess the individual circumstances of the student to determine the level and nature of support they require.

- **Who is eligible to receive a Priority Group Financial Award?**

To be eligible for the Priority Group Financial Award, a student must meet at least one of the four following eligibility criteria:

- Students in the care of the Local Authority including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Students leaving care where they have been in care for a total of 13 weeks or more either between the ages of 14 and 16 or between the ages of 16 and 18.
- Students living independently **and** in receipt of Universal Credit (Income Support) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone else who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner.
- Students in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right **as well as** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

3.2 Type 2 – Daily Meal Allowance in Further Education

- **What is this award?**

Franklin Sixth Form College provides a meal allowance each college day which is allocated to the Student College Card. During revision and exam periods this meal allowance may be increased to allow students to receive a breakfast as well as a main meal allowance.

Alternative arrangements will be made where students are being educated away from the main site. Wherever possible, this will be by arrangement with a catering provider near to the location of the student. In cases where this is not possible, payments may be made directly to the student, either in advance or on the production of receipts.

- **Who is eligible to receive a Daily Meal Allowance award?**

Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, **one or more** of the following benefits:

- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The 'Guarantee' element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 p.a.

Students who were entitled to and already receiving a free meal allowance on or after 1 April 2018 will continue to receive free meals.

Any students who are eligible for the Daily Meal Allowance will automatically receive Discretionary Support as detailed in **3.3** in the form of Free Bus Travel (if the student lives further than 1 mile from college) and support with resources/trips as being identified as being core to the courses being taken.

3.3 Type 3 – Discretionary Financial Support Awards

- **What is this award?**

Support from this fund is available for students whose total annual household income does not exceed £40,000. Household income includes the income from primary caregivers but does not include that of siblings who live at the same property. Where there are doubts about what should be included in the total household income, the College will decide and provide advice to the student.

- **Who is eligible to receive a Discretionary Financial Support Award?**

A student who is assessed as being eligible for this could qualify to receive a choice of the following:

- Meal Allowance
- OR
- Free Bus Travel (if the student lives further than 1 mile from College)

In addition, any student receiving this award will be entitled to support with any education resources/trips identified as being mandatory to the courses being taken.

3.4 Type 4 – Care to Learn

- **What is this award?**

The Care to Learn scheme supports students with the cost of childcare whilst attending College. Students can receive up to £180 per child per week to help with these costs, with the amount being awarded assessed individually.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- keeping a childcare place over the summer holidays for a maximum of 8 weeks
- taking a child to their childcare provider – travel costs

Franklin College will pay the childcare direct to the childcare provider. A student's registered childcare provider must confirm their child's attendance and Franklin Sixth Form College will, in turn confirm that student is attending their course. Travel costs associated with taking a child to a childcare provider are paid directly by Franklin Sixth Form College. Payments end when a student either stops attending their course or they reach the end of their course or their child stops attending childcare.

- **Who is eligible to receive a Care to Learn Financial Support Award?**

A student who meets the following criteria is eligible to receive an award:

- The student is a parent under 20 years old at the start of their course
- The student is the main carer for their child
- The student lives in England
- The student is either a British citizen or has a legal right to live and study in England
- The course being taken qualifies
- The childcare provider qualifies

Care to Learn is only available for publicly-funded courses in England. This includes courses that take place at Franklin Sixth Form College and those courses that are managed by Franklin College in the Community. To qualify, a childcare provider must be one of the following, registered with OfSTED, registered with a childminder agency or a school. They can be a childminder; preschool playgroup; a day nursery or an out of school club.

Students need to apply to the College, they will need to complete an application form and provide **EITHER** a copy of the child's birth certificate **OR** a letter confirming receipt of Child Benefit for that child.

4.0 Policy References

4.1 Access to the policy

The policy will be available via Franklin College's Management Information System and also published on the College's website www.franklin.ac.uk/student-life/financial-support/

4.2 Quality and Assurance Monitoring

The College Leadership Team and the College's Governing Body will review the policy annually.